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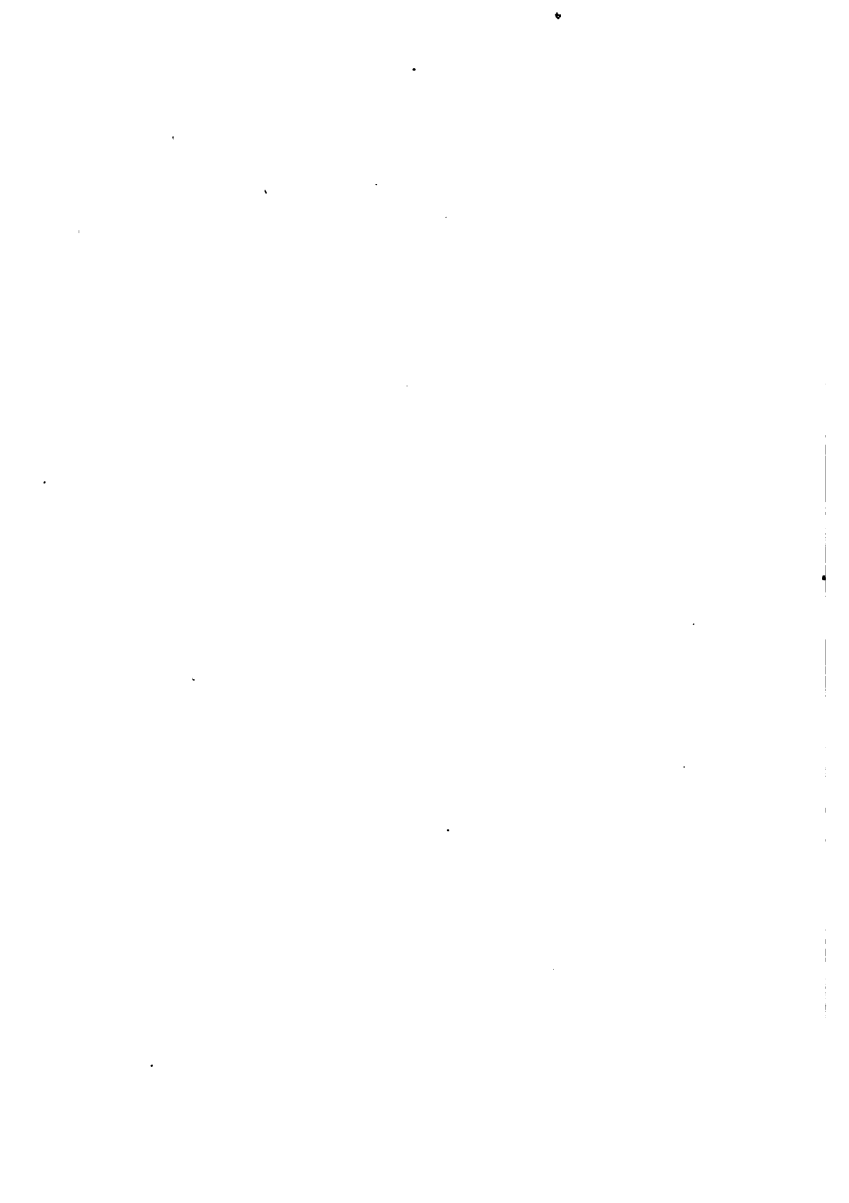
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BRITISH AUTHORS.
VOL. 767.

FREDERICK THE GREAT BY THOMAS CARLYLE.
VOL. XIII



HISTORY
OF
FRIEDRICH II. OF PRUSSIA,

CALLED
FREDERICK THE GREAT.

BY
THOMAS CARLYLE.

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VOL. XIII.

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1865.

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BOOK XXI.

AFTERNOON AND EVENING OF FRIEDRICH'S LIFE.

1763-1786.

CHAPTER I.

PREFATORY.

THE Twelve Hercules-labours of this King have ended here; what was required of him in World-History is accomplished. There remain to Friedrich Twenty-three Years more of Life, which to Prussian History are as full of importance as ever; but do not essentially concern European History, Europe having gone the road we now see it in. On the grand World-Theatre, the curtain has fallen for a New Act; Friedrich's part, like everybody's for the present, is played out. In fact, there is, during the rest of his Reign, nothing of World-History to be dwelt on anywhere. America, it has been decided, shall be English; Prussia be a Nation. The French, as finis of their attempt to cut Germany in Four, find themselves sunk into torpor, abeyance, and dry rot; fermenting towards they know not what. Towards Spontaneous Combustion, in the year 1789, and for long years onwards!

There, readers, there is the next mile-stone for you, in the History of Mankind! That universal Burning-up, as in hellfire, of Human Shams. The oath of Twenty-five Million men, which has since become that of all men whatsoever, "Rather than live longer under lies, we will die!" — that is the New Act in World-History. New Act, — or, we may call it *New Part*; Drama of World-History, Part Third. If *Part Second* was 1,800 years ago, this I reckon will be *Part Third*. This is

the truly celestial-infernal Event: the strangest we have seen for a thousand years. Celestial in one part; in the other, infernal. For it is withal, the breaking-out of universal mankind into Anarchy, into the faith and practice of *No-Government*, — that is to say (if you will be candid), into unappeasable Revolt against Sham-Governors and Sham-Teachers, — which I do charitably define to be a Search, most unconscious, yet in deadly earnest, for true Governors and Teachers. That is the one fact of World-History worth dwelling on at this day; and Friedrich cannot be said to have had much hand farther in that.

Nor is the progress of a French or European world, all silently ripening and rotting towards such issue, a thing one wishes to dwell on. Only when the Spontaneous Combustion breaks out; and, many-coloured, with loud noises, envelopes the whole world in anarchic flame for long hundreds of years: then has the Event come; there is the thing for all men to mark, and to study and scrutinise as the strangest thing they ever saw. Centuries of it yet lying ahead of us; several sad Centuries, sordidly tumultuous, and good for little! Say Two Centuries yet, — say even Ten of such a process: before the Old is completely burnt out, and the New in any state of sightliness? Millennium of Anarchies; — abridge it, spend your heart's blood upon abridging it, ye Heroic Wise that are to come! For it is the consummation of All the Anarchies that are and were; — which I do trust always means the death (temporary death) of them; Death of the Anarchies: or a world once more built wholly on Fact better or worse; and the lying jargonizing professor of Sham-Fact, whose name is Legion, who as yet (oftenest little conscious of him-

self) goes tumulting and swarming from shore to shore, become a species extinct, and well known to be gone down to Tophet! —

There were bits of Anarchies before, little and greater: but till that of France in 1789, there was none long memorable; all were pigmies in comparison, and not worth mentioning separately. In 1772 the Anarchy of Poland, which had been a considerable Anarchy for about three hundred years, got itself extinguished, — what we may call extinguished; — decisive surgery being then first exercised upon it: an Anarchy but in the sure way of extinction. In 1775, again, there began, over seas, another Anarchy much more considerable, — little dreaming that it could be called an Anarchy; on the contrary, calling itself Liberty, Rights of Man; and singing boundless Lo-Pæans to itself, as is common in such cases; an Anarchy which has been challenging the Universe to show the like, ever since. And which has, at last, flamed up as an independent Phenomenon, unexampled in the hideously suicidal way; — and does need much to get burnt out, that matters may begin anew on truer conditions. But neither the *Partition of Poland* nor the *American War of Independence* have much general importance, or, except, as precursors of 1789, are worth dwelling on in History. From us here, so far as Friedrich is concerned with them, they may deserve some transient mention, more or less: but World-History, eager to be at the general Funeral-pile and ultimate Burning-up of Shams in this poor World, will have less and less to say of small tragedies and premonitory symptoms.

Curious how the busy and continually watchful and

speculating Friedrich, busied about his dangers from Austrian encroachments, from Russian-Turk Wars, Bavarian Successions, and other troubles and anarchies close by; saw nothing to dread in France; nothing to remark there, except carelessly from time to time, its beggarly decaying condition, so strangely sunk in arts, in arms, in finance; oftenest an object of pity to him, for he still has a love for France; and reads not the least sign of that immeasurable all-engulfing *French Revolution* which was in the wind! Neither Voltaire nor he have the least anticipation of such a thing. Voltaire and he see, to their contentment, Superstition visibly declining: Friedrich rather disapproves the heat of Voltaire's procedures on the *Infâme*. "Why be in such heat? Other nonsense, quite equal to it, will be almost sure to follow. Take care of your own skin!" Voltaire and he are deeply alive, especially Voltaire is, to the horrors and miseries which have issued on mankind from a Fanatic Popish Superstition, or Creed of Incredibilities, — which (except from the throat outwards, from the bewildered tongue outwards) the orthodox themselves cannot believe, but only pretend and struggle to believe. This Voltaire calls "*The Infamous*;" and this — what name can any of us give it? The man who believes in falsities is very miserable. The man who cannot believe them, but only struggles and pretends to believe; and yet, being armed with the power of the sword, industriously keeps menacing and slashing all round, to compel every neighbour to do like him: what is to be done with such a man? Human Nature calls him a Social Nuisance; needing to be handcuffed, gagged, and abated. Human Nature, if it be in a terrified and imperilled state, with the

sword of this fellow swashing round it, calls him "Infamous," and a Monster of Chaos. He is indeed the select Monster of that region; the Patriarch of all the Monsters, little as he dreams of being such. An Angel of Heaven the poor caitiff dreams himself rather, and in cheery moments is conscious of being: — Bedlam holds in it no madder article. And I often think he will again need to be tied up (feeble as he now is in comparison, disinclined though men are to manacling and tying), so many helpless infirm souls are wandering about, not knowing their-right hand from their left, who fall a prey to him. "*L'Infâme*" I also name him, — knowing well enough how little he, in his poor muddled drugged and stupefied mind, is conscious of deserving that name. More signal enemy to God, and friend of the Other Party, walks not the Earth in our day.

Anarchy in the shape of religious slavery was what Voltaire and Friedrich saw all round them. Anarchy in the shape of Revolt against Authorities was what Friedrich and Voltaire had never dreamed of as possible, and had not in their minds, the least idea of. In one, or perhaps two places, you may find in Voltaire a grim and rather glad forethought, not given out as prophecy, but felt as interior assurance in a moment of hope, How these Priestly Sham Hierarchies will be pulled to pieces, probably on the sudden, once people are awake to them. Yes, my much-suffering M. de Voltaire, be pulled to pieces; or go aloft, like the awakening of Vesuvius, one day, — Vesuvius awakening after ten centuries of slumber, when his crater is all grown grassy, bushy, copiously "tenanted by wolves" I am told; which, after premonitory grumblings, heeded by

no wolf or bush, he will hurl bodily aloft, ten acres at a time, in a very tremendous manner!* A thought like this, about the Priestly Sham-Hierarchies, I have found somewhere in Voltaire: but of the Social and Civic Sham-Hierarchies (which are likewise accursed, if they knew it, and indeed are junior copartners of the Priestly; and, in a sense, sons and products of them, and cannot escape being partakers of their plagues), there is no hint in Voltaire, though Voltaire stood at last only fifteen years from the Fact (1778-1793); nor in Friedrich, though he lived almost to see the Fact beginning.

Friedrich's History being henceforth that of a Prussian King, is interesting to Prussia chiefly, and to us little otherwise than as the Biography of a distinguished fellow-man. Friedrich's Biography, his Physiognomy as he grows old, quietly on his own harvest-field, among his own People: this has still an interest, and for any feature of this we shall be eager enough; but this withal is the most of what we now want. And not very much even of this; Friedrich the unique King, not having as a man any such depth and singularity, tragic, humorous, devotionally pious, or other, as to authorise much painting in that aspect. Extreme brevity befits us in these circumstances: and indeed there are, — as has already happened in different parts of this Enterprise (Nature herself, in her silent way, being always something of an Artist in such things), — other circumstances, which leave us no choice as to that of detail. Available details, if we wished to

* First modern Eruption of Vesuvius, A. D. 1631, after long interval of rest.

give them, of Friedrich's later Life, are not forthcoming: masses of incondite marine-stores, tumbled out on you, dry rubbish shot with uncommon diligence for a hundred years, till, for Rubbish-Pelion piled on Rubbish-Ossa, you lose sight of the stars and azimuths; whole mountain continents, seemingly all of cinders and sweepings (though fragments and remnants do lie hidden, could you find them again): — these are not details that will be available! Anecdotes there are in quantity; but of uncertain quality; of doubtful authenticity, above all. One recollects hardly any Anecdote whatever that seems completely credible, or renders to us the Physiognomy of Friedrich in a convincing manner. So remiss a creature has the Prussian Clio been, — employed on all kinds of loose errands over the Earth and the Air; and as good as altogether negligent of this most pressing errand in her own House. Peace be with her, poor slut; why should we say one other hard word on taking leave of her to all eternity! —

The practical fact is, what we have henceforth to produce is more of the nature of a loose Appendix of Papers, than of a finished Narrative. Loose Papers, — which, we will hope, the reader can, by industry, be made to understand and tolerate: more we cannot do for him. No continuous Narrative is henceforth possible to us. For the sake of Friedrich's closing Epoch, we will visit, for the last time, that dreary imbroglío under which the memory of Friedrich, which ought to have been, in all the epochs of it, bright and legible, lies buried; and will try to gather, as heretofore, and put under labels. What dwells with oneself as human, may have some chance to be humanly interesting. In the wildest chaos of marine-stores and editorial short-

comings (provided only the editors speak truth, as these poor fellows do), *this* can be done. Part the living from the dead; pick out what has some meaning, leave carefully what has none; you will in some small measure pluck up the memory of a hero, like drowned honour by the locks, and rescue it into visibility.

That Friedrich, on reaching home, made haste to get out of the bustle of joyances and exclamations on the streets; proceeded straight to his music-chapel in Charlottenburg, summoning the Artists, or having them already summoned; and had there, all alone, sitting invisible wrapt in his cloak, Graun's or somebody's grand *Te-Deum* pealed out to him, in seas of melody, — soothing and salutary to the altered soul, revolving many things, — is a popular myth, of pretty and appropriate character; but a myth only, with no real foundation, though it has some loose and apparent.* No doubt, Friedrich had his own thoughts on entering Berlin again, after such a voyage through the deeps; himself, his Country still here, though solitary and in a world of wild shipwrecks. He was not without piety; but it did not take the devotional form, and his habits had nothing of the clerical.

What is perfectly known, and much better worth knowing, is the instantaneous practical alacrity with which he set about repairing that immense miscellany of ruin; and the surprising success he had in dealing with it. His methods, his rapid inventions and procedures, in this matter, are still memorable to Prussia; and perhaps might with advantage be better known than they are in some other Countries. To us, what

* In Prussia, II. 46, all the details of it.

is all we can do with them here, they will indicate that this is still the old Friedrich, with his old activities and promptitudes; which indeed continue unabated, lively in Peace as in War, to the end of his life and reign.

The speed with which Prussia recovered was extraordinary. Within little more than a year (June 1st, 1764), the Coin was all in order again; in 1765, the King had rebuilt, not to mention other things, "in Silesia 8,000 Houses, in Pommern 6,500."* Prussia has been a meritorious Nation; and, however cut and ruined, is and was in a healthy state, capable of recovering soon. Prussia has defended itself against overwhelming odds, — brave Prussia; but the real soul of its merit, was that of having merited such a King to command it. Without this King, all its valours, disciplines, resources of war, would have availed Prussia little. No wonder Prussia has still a loyalty to its great Friedrich, to its Hohenzollern Sovereigns generally. Without these Hohenzollerns, Prussia had been, what we long ago saw it, the unluckiest of German Provinces; and could never have had the pretension to exist as a Nation at all. Without this particular Hohenzollern, it had been trampled out again, after apparently succeeding. To have achieved a Friedrich the Second for King over it, was Prussia's grand merit.

An accidental merit, thinks the reader? No, reader, you may believe me, it is by no means altogether such. Nay, I rather think, could we look into the Account-Books of the Recording Angel for a course of centuries, no part of it is such! There are Nations in which a Friedrich is, or can be, possible; and again there are Nations in which he is not and cannot. To be practi-

* Rôdenbeck, II. 234, 261.

cally reverent of Human Worth to the due extent, and abhorrent of Human Want of Worth in the like proportion, do you understand that art at all? I fear, not, — or that you are much forgetting it again! Human Merit, do you really love it *enough*, think you; — human Scoundrelism (brought to the dock for you, and branded as scoundrel), do you even abhor it enough? Without that reverence and its corresponding opposite-pole of abhorrence, there is simply no possibility left. That, my friend, is the outcome and summary of all virtues in this world, for a man or for a Nation of men. It is the supreme strength and glory of a Nation; — without which, indeed, all other strengths, and enormities of bullion and arsenals and warehouses, are no strength. None, I should say; — and are oftenest even the *reverse*.

Nations who have lost this quality, or who never had it, what Friedrich can they hope to be possible among them? Age after age, they grind down their Friedrichs, contentedly under the hoofs of cattle on their highways; and even find it an excellent practice, and pride themselves on Liberty and Equality. Most certain it is, there will no Friedrich come to rule there; by and by, there will none be born there. Such Nations cannot have a King to command them; can only have this or the other scandalous swindling Copper Captain, constitutional Gilt Mountebank, or other the like unsalutary entity by way of King; and the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children in a frightful and tragical manner, little noticed in the Penny Newspapers and Periodical Literatures of this generation. Oh my friends —! — But there is plain Business waiting us at hand.

CHAPTER II.

REPAIRING OF A RUINED PRUSSIA.

THAT of Friedrich's sitting wrapt in a cloud of reflexions Olympian-Abysmal, in the music-chapel at Charlottenburg, while he had the Ambrosian Song executed for him there, as the preliminary step, was a loose myth; but the fact lying under it is abundantly certain. Few Sons of Adam had more reason for a piously-thankful feeling towards the Past, a piously-valiant towards the Future. What king or man had seen himself delivered from such strangling imbroglios of destruction, such devouring rages of a hostile world? And the ruin worked by them lay monstrous and appalling all round. Friedrich is now Fifty-one gone; unusually old for his age; feels himself an old man, broken with years and toils; and here lies his Kingdom in haggard slashed condition, worn to skin and bone: How is the King, resourceless, to remedy it? That is now the seemingly impossible problem. "Begin it, — thereby alone will it ever cease to be impossible!" Friedrich begins, we may say, on the first morrow morning. Labours at his problem, as he did in the march to Leuthen; finds it to become more possible, day after day, month after month, the farther he strives with it.

"Why not leave it to Nature?" think many, with the Dismal Science at their elbow. Well; that was the easiest plan, but it was not Friedrich's. His remain-

ing moneys, 25 million thalers ready for a Campaign which has not come, he distributes to the most necessitous: "all his artillery-horses" are parted into plough-teams, and given to those who can otherwise get none: think what a fine figure of rye and barley, instead of mere windlestraws, beggary and desolation, was realised by that act alone. Nature is ready to do much; will of herself cover, with some veil of grass and lichen, the nakedness of ruin: but her victorious act, when she can accomplish it, is that of getting *you* to go with her handsomely, and change disaster itself into new wealth. Into new wisdom and valour, which are wealth in all kinds; California mere zero to them, zero, or even a frightful *minus* quantity! Friedrich's procedures in this matter I believe to be little less didactic than those other, which are so celebrated in War: but no Dryasdust, not even a Dryasdust of the Dismal Science, has gone into them, rendered men familiar with them in their details and results. His Silesian Land-Bank (joint-stock Moneys, lent on security of Land) was of itself, had I room to explain it, an immense furtherance.* Friedrich, many tell us, was as great in Peace as in War: and truly, in the economic and material provinces, my own impression, gathered painfully in darkness, and contradiction of the Dismal-Science Doctors, is much to that effect. A first-rate Husbandman (as his Father had been); who not only defended his Nation, but made it rich beyond what seemed possible; and diligently sowed annuals into it, and perennials which flourish aloft at this day.

Mirabeau's *Monarchie Prussienne*, in 8 thick Volumes 8vo, — composed, or hastily cobbled together, some

* Preuss, III. 75; *Œuvres de Frédéric*, vi. 81.

Twenty years after this period, — contains the best tabular view one anywhere gets of Friedrich's economics, military and other practical methods and resources: — solid exact Tables these are, and intelligent intelligible descriptions, done by *Mauvillon Fils*, the same punctual Major Mauvillon who used to attend us in Duke Ferdinand's War; — and so far as *Mirabeau* is concerned, the Work consists farther of a certain small Essay done in big type, shoved into the belly of each Volume, and eloquently recommending, with respectful censures and regrets over Friedrich, the Gospel of Free Trade, dear to Papa Mirabeau. The Son is himself a convert; far above lying, even to please Papa: but one can see, the thought of Papa gives him new fire of expression. They are eloquent, ruggedly strong Essays, those of *Mirabeau Junior* upon Free Trade: — they contain, in condensed shape, everything we were privileged to hear, seventy years later, from all organs, coach-horns, jews-harps and scrannel-pipes, *pro* and *contra*, on the same sublime subject: "God is great, and Plugson of Undershot is his Prophet. Thus saith the Lord, Buy "in the cheapest market, sell in the dearest!" To which the afflicted human mind listens what it can; — and after seventy years, mournfully asks itself and *Mirabeau*, "M. le Comte, would there have been in Prussia, for example, any Trade at all; any Nation at all, had it always been left 'Free'? There would have been mere sand and quagmire, and a community of wolves and bisons, M. le Comte. Have the goodness to terminate that Litany, and take up another!"

We said, Friedrich began his problem on the first

morrow morning; and that is literally true, that or even more. Here is how Friedrich takes his stand amid the wreck, speedy enough to begin: this view of our old friend Nüssler and him is one of the Pieces we can give, — thanks to Herr Büsching and his *Beyträge* for the last time! Nüssler is now something of a Country Gentleman, so to speak; has a pleasant place out to east of Berlin; is *Landrath* (County Chairman) there, “*Landrath of Nether-Barnim Circle*,” where we heard of the Cossacks spoiling him: he, as who not, has suffered dreadfully in these tumults. Here is Büsching’s welcome Account.

Landrath Nüssler and the King (30th March — 3d April 1763).

“*Memoir 30th, 1763, Friedrich, on his return to Berlin, came by the route of Tassdorf,*” — Tassdorf, in Nether-Barnim Circle (40 odd miles from Frankfurt, and above 15 from Berlin); — “and changed horses there. During this little pause, among a crowd assembled to see him, he was addressed by Nüssler, “*Landrath of the Circle, who had a very piteous story to tell. Nüssler wished the King joy of his noble victories, and of the glorious Peace at last achieved: “May your Majesty reign in health and happiness over “us many years, to the blessing of us all!*” — and “recommended to his gracious care the extremely ruined, “and, especially by the Russians, uncommonly devastated Circle, for which” (continues Büsching) “this “industrious Landrath had not hitherto been able to “extract any effective help.” Generally for the Provinces wasted by the Russians there had already some

poor 300,000 thalers (45,000*l.*) been allowed by a helpful Majesty, not over-rich himself at the moment; and of this, Nether-Barnim no doubt gets its share: but what is this to such ruin as there is? A mere preliminary drop, instead of the bucket and buckets we need! — Büsching, a dull, though solid accurate kind of man, heavy-footed, and yet always in a hurry, always slipshod, has nothing of dramatic here; far from it; but the facts themselves fall naturally into that form,— in Three Scenes:

1. *Tassdorf* (still two hours from Berlin), *King*, *Nüssler* and a *Crowd of People*, *Nüssler alone daring to speak*.

King (from his Carriage, ostlers making despatch). "What is your Circle most short of?"

Landrath Nüssler. "Of horses for ploughing the seed-fields, of rye to sow them, and of bread till the crops come."

King. "Rye for bread, and to sow with, I will give; with horses I cannot assist."

Nüssler. "On representation of Privy-Councillor von Brenkenhof" (the Minister concerned with such things), "your Majesty has been pleased to give the Neumark and Pommern an allowance of Artillery- and Commissariat-Horses: but poor Nether-Barnim, nobody will speak for it; and unless your Majesty's gracious self please to take pity on it, Nether-Barnim is lost!" — ("A great many things more he said, in presence of a large crowd of men who had gathered round the King's Carriage as the horses were being changed; and spoke with such force and frankness that the King was surprised, and asked:—

King. "Who are you?" (has forgotten the long-serviceable man!)

Nüssler. "I am the Nüssler who was lucky enough to manage the Fixing of the Silesian Boundaries for your Majesty!"

King. "Ja, ja, now I know you again! Bring me all the Landraths of the Kurmark" (Mark of Brandenburg Proper, Electoral Mark) "in a body; I will speak with them."

Nüssler. "All of them but two are in Berlin already."

King. "Send off estafettes for those two to come at once "to Berlin; and on Thursday," day after tomorrow, "come "yourself, with all the others, to the Schloss to me: I will "then have some closer conversation, and say what I can "and will do for helping of the country" (*King's Carriage rolls away, with low bows and blessings from Nüssler and everybody*).

2. *Thursday, April 1st, Nüssler and assembled Landraths at the Schloss of Berlin*. To them, enter *King*. * *

Nüssler (whom they have appointed spokesman). * * "Your Majesty has given us Peace; you will also give us "Well-being in the Land again: we leave it to Highest-the-Same's gracious judgment" (no limit to Highest-the-Same's power, it would seem) "what you will vouchsafe to us as in-"demnification for the Russian plunderings."

King. "Be you quiet; let me speak. Have you got a "pencil (*Hat Er crayon*)? Yes! Well then, write, and these "Gentlemen shall dictate to you:

"How much rye for bread; How much for seed; How "many Horses, Oxen, Cows, their Circles do in an entirely "pressing way require?

"Consider all that to the bottom; and come to me again "the day after tomorrow. But see that you fix everything with "the utmost exactitude, for I cannot give much." (*Exit King*).

Nüssler (to the Landraths). "*Meine Herren*, have the "goodness to accompany me to our Landschaft House" (we have a kind of County Hall, it seems); "there we will con-"sider everything."

"And Nüssler, guiding the deliberations, which are glad to "follow him on every point, and writing as *Pro-tempore* Secretary, has all things brought to luminous Protocol, in the "course of this day and next."

3. *Saturday April 3d, in the Schloss again. Nüssler and Landraths*. To them, the *King*.

Nüssler. "We deliver to your Majesty the written Specification you were graciously pleased to command of us. It "contains only the indispensablest things that the Circles "are in need of. Moreover, it regards only the *Stände*"

(richer Nobility), "who pay contribution; the Gentry" (*Adel*), "and other poor people, who have been utterly plundered out by the Russians, are not included in it: — the Gentry too have suffered very much by the War and the Plundering."

King. "What *Edelleute* that are members of *Stände* have you" (*Er*) "got in your Circle?"

Nüssler (names them; and, as finis of the list, adds): * * "I myself, too, your Majesty, I have suffered more than anybody: I absolutely could not furnish those 4,000 bushels of meal ordered of me by the Russians; upon which they —"

King. "I cannot give to all: but if you have poor Nobles in your Circle, who can in no way help themselves, I will give them something."

Nüssler ("has not any in Nether-Barnim who are altogether in that extreme predicament; but knows several in Lebus Circle, names them to the King; — and turning to the Landrath of Lebus, and to another who is mute): 'Herr, you can name some more in Lebus; and you, in Teltow Circle, Herr Landrath, since his Majesty permits.' * * In a word, "the King having informed himself and declared his intention, Nüssler leads the Landraths to their old County Hall, and brings to Protocol what had taken place.

"Next day, the Kammer President" (Exchequer President), "Von der Gröben, had Nüssler, with other Landraths, to dinner. During dinner, there came from Head-Secretary "Eichel" (Majesty's unwearied Clerk of the *Pells*, Sheepskins, or *Papers*) "an earnest request to Von der Gröben for help, — Eichel not being able to remember, with the requisite precision, everything his Majesty had bid him put down on this matter. 'You will go, Herr von Nüssler; be so kind, won't you?' And Nüssler went, and fully illuminated "Eichel." * *

To the poorest of the Nobility, Büsching tells us, what is otherwise well known, the King gave considerable sums: to one Circle 12,000*l.*, to another 9,000*l.*, 6,000*l.*, and so on. "By help of which bounties, and of Nüssler labouring incessantly with all his strength, Nieder-Barnim Circle got on its feet again, no subject having been entirely ruined, but all "proving able to recover." †

† Büsching, *Beiträge* (§ Nüssler), I. 401-405.

This Büsching Fragment is not in the style of the Elder Dramatists, or for the Bankside Theatre; but this represents a Fact which befel in God's Creation, and may have an interest of its own to the Practical Soul, especially in anarchic Countries, far advanced in the "Gold-nugget and Nothing to Buy with it" Career of unexampled Prosperities.

On these same errands, the King is soon going on an Inspection Journey, where we mean to accompany. But first, one word, and one will suffice, on the debased Coin. The Peace was no sooner signed, than Friedrich proceeded on the Coin. The third week after his arrival home, there came out a salutary Edict on it, it, April 21st; King eager to do it without loss of time, yet with the deliberation requisite. Not at one big leap, which might shake, to danger of oversetting, much commercial arrangement; but at two leaps, with a halfway station intervening. Halfway station, with a new coinage ready, much purer of alloy (and marked *how* much, for the benefit of parties with accounts to settle), is to commence on *Trinitatis* (Whitsunday) instant; from and after Whitsunday, the improved new coin to be sole legal tender, till farther notice. Farther notice comes accordingly, within a year, March 29th, 1764: "Pure money of the standard of 1750" (honest silver coinage: readers may remember Linsenbarth, the *Candidatus Theologiæ*, and his sack of Batzen, confiscated at the Paekhof) "shall be ready on the 1st of June instant;"* — from and after which day we hear no more of that sad matter. Finished off in about

* Rödénbeck, II. 214, 234.

fourteen months. Here, meanwhile, is the Inspection Journey.

Kriegsrath Roden and the King (6th-13th June 1763).

June 2d, 1763, Friedrich left Potsdam for Westphalia; got as far as Magdeburg that day. Intends seeing into matters with his own eyes in that region, as in others, after so long and sad an absence. There are with him Friedrich Wilhelm Prince of Prussia, a tall young fellow of nineteen; General-Adjutant von Anhalt; and one or two Prussian military people. From Magdeburg and onwards the great Duke Ferdinand accompanies, — who is now again Governor of Magdeburg, and a quiet Prussian Officer as heretofore, though with excellent Pensions from England, and glory from all the world.

The Royal Party goes by Halberstadt, which suffered greatly in the War; thence by *Minden* (June 4th); and the first thing next day, Friedrich takes view of the *Battlefield* there, — under Ferdinand's own guidance, doubtless; and an interesting thing to both Friedrich and him, though left silent to us. This done, they start for Lippstadt, are received there under joyous clangorous outburst of all the bells and all the honours, that same afternoon; and towards sunset, Hamm being the Night-quarter ahead, are crossing *Vellinghausen Battleground*, — where doubtless Ferdinand again, like a dutiful apprentice, will explain matters to his old master, so far as needful or permissible. The conversation, I suppose, may have been lively and miscellaneous: Ferdinand mentions a clever business-person of the name of Roden, whom he has

known in these parts; "Roden?" the King carefully makes note; — and, in fact, we shall see Roden presently, and his bit of *Dialogue* with the King (recorded by his own hand) is our chief errand on this Journey. From Hamm, next morning (June 6th), they get to Wesel by 11 A.M. (only sixty miles); Wesel all in gala as Lippstadt was, or still more than Lippstadt; and for four days farther, they continue there very busy. As Roden is our chief errand, let us attend to Roden.

Wesel, Monday, June 6th, "Dinner being done," says an authentic Third-Party,* "the King had Kammer-Director Meyen summoned to him with his Register-Books, Schedules, and Reports" (what they call *États*); "and was but indifferently contented with Meyen and them." And in short, "ordering Meyen to remodel these into a more distinct condition," — we may now introduce the Herr Kriegs Rath Roden, a subaltern in rank, but who has perhaps a better head than Meyen to judge of these *États*. Roden himself shall now report. This is the Royal Dialogue with Roden; accurately preserved for us by him; — I wish it had been better worth the reader's trouble; but its perfect credibility in every point will be some recommendation to it.

"Monday, 6th June 1763, about 11 A.M. his Majesty arrived "in Wesel," says Roden (confirming to us the authentic Third-Party); "I waited on Adjutant-General Colonel von Anhalt to "announce myself; who referred me to Kriegs Rath Cöper" ('*mein Segreter Köper*' is a name we have heard before), "who "told me to be ready so soon as Dinner should be over. "Dinner was no sooner over" (2 P.M. or so), "than the Herr Kammer-Director Meyen with his *Etats* was called in. His

* Rüdtenbeck, II. 217.

"Majesty was not content with these, Herr Meyen was told; and they were to be remodelled into a more distinct condition. The instant Herr Meyen stepped out, I was called in. His Majesty was standing with his back to the fire; and said:

King. "Come nearer" (Roden comes nearer). "Prince Ferdinand" (of Brunswick, whom we generally call *Duke* and great, to distinguish him from a little Prussian Prince Ferdinand) "has told me much good of you: where do you come from?"

Roden. "From Soest" (venerable "stone-old" little Town, in Vellinghausen region).

King. "Did you get my Letter?"

Roden. "Yea, *Ihro Majestät*."

King. "I will give you some employment. Have you got a pencil?"

Roden. "Yea" (and took out his Notebook and tools, which he had "bought in a shop a quarter of an hour before").

King. "Listen. By the War many Houses have got ruined: I mean that they shall be put in order again; for which end, — to those that cannot themselves help, particularly to Soest, Hamm, Lünen and in part Wesel, as places that have suffered most, — I intend to give the moneys. Now you must make me an exact List of what is to be done in those places. Thus" (King, lifting his finger, let us fancy, dictates; Roden, with brand-new pencil and tablets, writes):

"10. In each of those Towns, how many ruined Houses there are, which the proprietors themselves can manage to rebuild. 20. How many which the proprietors cannot. 30. The vacant grounds or steadings of such proprietors as are perhaps dead, or gone elsewhere, must be given to others that are willing to build: but, in regard to this, Law also must do its part, and the absent and the heirs must be cited to say, Whether they will themselves build? and in case they won't, the steadings can then be given to others." Roden having written, —

King. "In the course of six days, you must be ready" (what an expeditious King! Is to be at Cleve the sixth,

day hence: Meet me there, then), — “longer I cannot give you.”

Roden (considering a moment). “If your Majesty will permit me to use *estafettes*” (express messengers) “for the Towns farthest off, — as I cannot myself, within the time, travel over all the Towns, — I hope to be ready.”

King. “That I permit; and will repay you the *estafette* moneys. — Tell me, How comes the decrease of population in these parts? Recruits I got none.”

Roden. “Under favour of your Majesty, Regiment Schenkendorf got, every year, for recompletion, what recruits were wanted, from its Canton in the Grafschaft Mark here.”

King. “There you may be right: but from Cleve Country we had no recruits; not we, though the Austrians had” (with a slight sarcasm of tone).

Roden. “Out of Cleve, so far as I know, there were no recruits delivered to the Austrians.”

King. “You could not know; you were with the Allied Army” (Duke Ferdinand’s, commissariating and the like, where Duke Ferdinand recognised you to have a head).

Roden. “There have been many epidemic diseases too; especially in Soest; — after the Battle of Vellinghausen all the wounded were brought thither, and the hospitals were established there.”

King. “Epidemic diseases they might have got without a Battle” (dislikes hearing ill of the soldier trade). “I will have Order sent to the Cleve Kammer, Not to lay hindrance in your way, but the contrary. Now God keep you (*Gott bewahre Ikn*).” — Exit Roden; — “*darauf retirirte mich*,” says he; — but will reappear shortly.

Sunday 12th June is the sixth day hence; later than the end of Sunday is not permissible to swift Roden; nor does he need it.

Friday 10th, Friedrich left Wesel; crossed the Rhine, intending for Cleve; went by *Crefeld*, — at Crefeld, had view of another *Battlefield*, under good ciceroneship; remarks of circumstances otherwise not given: — and, next day, Saturday 11th, picked up D’Alembert, who, by appointment, is proceeding towards Potsdam, at a more leisurely rate. That same

Saturday, after much business done, the King was at Kempen, thence at Geldern; speeding for Cleve itself, due there that night. At Geldern, we say, he picked up D'Alembert; — concerning whom, more by and by. And finally, "on Saturday night, about halfpast 8, the King entered Cleve," amid joyances extraordinary, but did not alight; drove direct through by the Nassau Gate, and took quarter "in the neighbouring Country-house of Bellevue, with the Dutch General von Spaen there," — an obliging acquaintance once, while *Lieutenant* Spaen, in our old Crown-Prince times of trouble! Had his year in Spandau for us there, while poor Katte lost his head! To whom, I have heard, the King talked charmingly on this occasion, but was silent as to old Potsdam matters. * —

By his set day, Roden is also in Cleve, punctual man, finished or just finishing; and ready for summons by his Majesty. And accordingly:

"*Cleve, Monday June 13th*, At 9 in the morning," records he, "I had audience of the King's Majesty:" — (In Spaen's Villa of Bellevue, shall we still suppose? Duke Ferdinand, Prince of Prussia, and the rest, have bestowed themselves in other fit houses; D'Alembert too, — who is to make direct for Potsdam henceforth, by his own route; and will meet us on arriving). — "I handed him my Report, with the Tabular *Schedulè*. His Majesty read it carefully through, in my presence; and examined all of it with strictness. Was pleased to signify his satisfaction with my work. Resolved "to allow 250,000 thalers (37,500*l.*) for this business of Re-building; gave out the due Orders to his Kammer, in consequence, and commanded me to arrange with the Kammer what was necessary. This done, his Majesty said:

King. "What you were described to me, I find you to be. "You are a diligent laborious man; I must have you nearer to me; — in the Berlin Kammer you ought to be. You shall "have a good, a right good Salary; your Patent I will give "you gratis; also a *Vorspann-Pass*" (Standing Order available at all Prussian Post-Stations) "for two carriages" (rapid Program of the thing, though yet distant, rising in the Royal fancy!). "Now serve on as faithfully as you have hitherto "done."

* *Supra*, vi. 27.

Roden. "That is the object of all my endeavours." (*Exit*: — I did not hear specially whitherward just now; but he comes to be supreme Kammer-President in those parts by and by.)

"The Herr Kriegs-rath Cöper was present, and noted all the Orders to be expedited." *

These snatches of notice at first-hand, and what the reader's fancy may make of these, are all we can bestow on this Section of Friedrich's Labours; which is naturally more interesting to Prussian readers than to English. He has himself given lucid and eloquent account of it, — Two ample Chapters, "*Des Finances*;" "*Du Militaire*,"** — altogether pleasant reading, should there still be curiosity upon it. There is something of flowingly eloquent in Friedrich's account of this Battle waged against the inanimate Chaos; something of exultant and triumphant, not noticeable of him in regard to his other Victories. On the Leuthens, Rossbachs, he is always cold as water, and nobody could gather that he had the least pleasure in recording them. Not so here. And indeed here he is as beautiful as anywhere; and the reader, as a general son of Adam, — proud to see human intellect and heroism slaying that kind of lions, and doing what in certain sad epochs is unanimously voted to be impossible and un-attemptable, — exults along with him; and perhaps whispers to his own poor heart, nearly choked by the immeasurable imbroglio of Blue-books and Parliamentary Eloquences which for the present encumber Heaven and Earth, "*Meliora spero*." To Mirabeau,

* Preuss, II. 442; Rôdenbeck, II. 217, 218: in regard to D'Alembert, see *Œuvres de Frédéric*, XXIV. 190.

** *Œuvres de Frédéric*, VII. 78-80, 91-109.

the following details, from First Hand, but already of twenty-three years distance, were not known,* while he sat penning those robust Essays on the Duty of *Leave-Alone*.

"To form an idea of the general subversion," says the King, in regard to 1763, "and how great were the desolation and discouragement, you must represent to yourself "Countries entirely ravaged, the very traces of the old habitations hardly discoverable; Towns, some ruined from top to bottom, others half-destroyed by fire; — 13,000 Houses, of which the very vestiges were gone. No field in seed; no grain for the food of the inhabitants; 60,000 horses needed, if there was to be ploughing carried on: in the Provinces generally Half-a-million Population (500,000) less than in 1756, — that is to say, upon only Four Millions and a Half, the ninth man was wanting. Noble and Peasant had been pillaged, ransomed, foraged, eaten out by so many different Armies; nothing now left them, but life and miserable rags.

"There was no credit by trading people, even for the "daily necessities of life." And furthermore, what we were not prepared for, "No police in the Towns: to habits of equity and order had succeeded a vile greed of gain and an anarchic disorder. The Colleges of Justice and of Finance had, by these frequent invasions of so many enemies, been "reduced to inaction:" no Judge, in many places not even a Taxgatherer: "the silence of the Laws had produced in the people a taste for license; boundless appetite for gain was their main rule of action: the noble, the merchant, the farmer, the labourer, raising emulously each the price of his commodity, seemed to endeavour only for their mutual ruin. Such, when the War ended, was the fatal spectacle over these Provinces, which had once been so flourishing: however pathetic the description may be, it will never approach the touching and sorrowful impression which the sight of it produced."

* Appeared first in *Tome v.* of "*Œuvres Posthumes de Frédéric II*" (are in *Tome vi.* of Prouse's Edition of *Œuvres*), "Berlin 1786;" — above a year after Mirabeau had left.

Friedrich found that it would never do to trust to the mere aid of Time in such circumstances: at the end of the Thirty-Years War, "Time" had, owing to absolute want of money, been the one recipe of the Great Elector in a similar case; and Time was then found to mean "about a hundred Years." Friedrich found that he must at once step in with active remedies, and on all hands to make the impossible possible. Luckily he had in readiness, as usual, the funds for an Eighth Campaign, had such been needed. Out of these moneys he proceeded to rebuild the Towns and Villages; "from the "Corn-Stores (*granaries d'abondance*," Government establishments gathered from plentiful harvests against scarce, according to old rule) "were taken the supplies for food of the "people and sowing of the ground: the horses intended for "the artillery, baggage and commissariat," 60,000 horses we have heard, "were distributed among those who had none, "to be employed in the tillage of the land. Silesia was discharged from all taxes for six months; Pommern and the "Neumark for two years. A sum of about Three Million "sterling" (in *thalers* 20,389,000) "was given for relief of the "Provinces, and as acquittance of the impositions the "Enemy had wrung from them.

"Great as was this expense, it was necessary and indispensable. The condition of these Provinces after the Peace "of Hubertsburg recalled what we know of them when the "Peace of Münster closed the famous Thirty-Years War. On "that occasion the State failed of help from want of means; "which put it out of the Great Elector's power to assist his "people: and what happened? That a whole century elapsed "before his Successors could restore the Towns and "Cham-paigns to what they were. This impressive example was "admonitory to the King: that to repair the Public Calamities, assistance must be prompt and effective. Repeated "gifts (*largesses*) restored courage to the poor Husbandmen, "who began to despair of their lot; by the helps given, hope "in all classes sprang up anew: encouragement of labour "produced activity; love of Country rose again with fresh "life: in a word" (within the second year in a markedly hopeful manner, and within seven years altogether), "the "fields were cultivated again, manufacturers had resumed "their work; and the Police, once more in vigour, corrected

"by degrees the vices that had taken root during the time of "anarchy." *

To Friedrich's difficulties, which were not inconsiderable, mark only this last additament: "During this War, the elder of the Councillors, and all the Ministers "of the Grand Directorium" (centre of Prussian Administration), "had successively died: and in such time of trouble it had been impossible to replace them. The "embarrassment was, To find persons capable of filling "these different employments" (some would have very soon done it, your Majesty; but their haste would not have tended to speed!) — "We searched the Provinces "(on *fouilla*, sifted), where good heads were found as "rare as in the Capital: at length five Chief Ministers "were pitched upon," — who prove to be tolerable, and even good. Three of them were, the *Vons* Blumenthal, Massow, Hagen, unknown to readers here: fourth and fifth were, the Von Wedell as War Minister, once Dictator at Züllichau; and a Von der Horst, who had what we might partially call the Home Department, and who may by accident once or so be nameable again.

Nor was War all, says the King: "accidental Fires "in different places," while we struggled to repair the ravagings of War, "were of unexampled frequency, "and did immense farther damage. From 1765 to "1769, here is the list of places burnt: In East "Preussen, the City of Königsberg twice over; in "Silesia, the Towns of Freystadt, Ober-Glogau" (do readers recollect Manteuffel of Foot and "*Wir wollen "ihm was*"!), "Parchwitz Naumburg-on-Queiss, and

* *Œuvres de Frédéric*, *vol. 14*, 76.